rehabilitation/rebuilding every year chargeable to Railway Annual Works Programme. A sum of Rs. 209 crores (Rs. 143 crores out of Special Railway Safety Fund and Rs. 66 crores out of Depreciation Reserve Fund) has been allotted for rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges during the year 2002-2003. Necessary staff for maintenance and operation is available.

Vacancies of Loco Staff in SER

1164. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over 1250 posts of loco running staff are vacant in South Eastern Railway;

(b) whether the existing staff is required to put extra hours of work, leading to fatigue, bearing an adverse impact on the safety of passengers; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to improve the safety of passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) No, Sir. As on 1.11.2002 there were 435 vacancies in the posts of loco running staff on South Eastern Railway. This amounts to 4.21 percent of the cadre. The leave reserve provided in the Drivers' category is 30% which is more than sufficient to take care of these 4.21 percent vacancies in this cadre.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. However, norms provide for working by the crew beyond the limits prescribed in exceptional exigencies of accidents, floods, agitations, equipment failures, etc., only.

Rail Food-over Bridge at Warangal

1165. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to construct a second railway booking counter and a foot-over bridge at Warangal Railway Station in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the allocation made therefor and by when the work would be taken up and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) The details of these 2 works are as under:

(i) Booking office & improvements to circulating area—the work was sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 14.13 lakh and 98% of the work is complete. The target date of completion for the work is December, 2002.

(ii) 2nd foot over bridge—This work has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 17.00 lakh with an outlay of Rs. 7.00 lakh for the current year. The target date of completion is July, 2003.

Dangerous Rail Bridges in Bihar

†1166. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rail bridges in Bihar which have been declared dangerous;

(b) the amount spent by Government for their repair and maintenance during the last three years;

(c) the details of the new bridges for which proposals are being considered; and

(d) by when construction work for the new bridges is likely to be undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Nil.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Works for rehabilitation/rebuilding of existing bridges is an ongoing exercise. As a result of detailed inspections, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges is carried out on a programmed basis. Further, besides new bridges under construction at Patna and Monghyr over river Ganga, one bridge is under consideration for construction over river Kosi in connection with restoration of Nirmali—Saraigarh line. Its construction, however, shall depend on availability of various sanctions & clearances.

Rail lines in backward Regions

1167. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.